



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**MARSHALL AREA VOLUNTEER HONORED FOR HIS IMPACT IN DANE COUNTY**  
**UNITED WAY COMMUNITY VOLUNTEER AWARDS WINNERS ANNOUNCED**

Over 520 people were in attendance as the **United Way Community Volunteer Awards** were presented today to dedicated volunteers who are making a tremendous impact on the key issues affecting our community.

Emcee Kim Sveum set the stage and Wisconsin's First Lady Jessica Doyle presented honorees and winners with their awards. This group showed a wide spectrum of people and activities, including Emmett Schulte who has donated and collected well over 1 million pounds of food to local pantries over the past 10 years through his volunteer efforts in planting and maintaining five gardens throughout Dane County.

The premier volunteer award, the 3<sup>rd</sup> annual **Mike McKinney Community Volunteer Award**, was awarded to Genna Eaton for her volunteer commitment to Dane County through the Waunakee Neighborhood Connection.

The winners were chosen from over 120 nominations, attesting to the incredible contributions of volunteers in Dane County. Two individual award recipients each received a \$1000 contribution to the non-profit at which they volunteer, the business award winners received a \$1000 contribution to the non-profit where they volunteer, and the youth award winner who received a \$500 scholarship for post-secondary education and a \$500 contribution to his non-profit. Four honorees were also recognized with a \$250 contribution to give to their non-profits. The contributions for winners and the event are generously sponsored by CUNA Mutual Group.

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“Volunteers and their contributions are absolutely essential for the success of this community, especially during these difficult economic times, and we are proud to sponsor this event,” said Steve Goldberg Executive Director of CUNA Mutual Foundation. “All the volunteers we are celebrating today are able to produce even greater results for Dane County because of how their efforts are aligned with our community’s Agenda for Change. Dane County is fortunate to be able to give volunteer efforts this strategic focus, so their actions can do even more for our non-profits and our community as a whole.”

United Way Community Volunteer Awards is one example of how United Way creates solutions for our community through action, focusing on the community’s Agenda for Change. In addition to many other resources provided, United Way supports volunteerism through the United Way Volunteer Center, United Way 2-1-1, the volunteeryourtime.org website and through events such as United Way Days of Caring and Youth Service Day.

### **Word of Mouth Campaign to Increase Number of Volunteers**

Volunteerism throughout Wisconsin has seen a decline from 1.7 million volunteers in 2004 to 1.4 million in 2007, while at the same time the total hours of volunteering in the state are increasing to a record 271.7 million volunteer hours.

#### **#1 Reason People Don’t Volunteer? They were never asked.**

This year, United Way of Dane County is unveiling a special word of mouth campaign to increase the number of volunteers working to advance our community’s Agenda for Change. Attendees of the Community Volunteer Awards Ceremony were given hundreds of “Will You Volunteer?” cards to help these great examples of volunteerism spread the word, share their stories and ask more people to volunteer.

### **VOLUNTEERING FACTS**

- Last year, the United Way Volunteer Center referred over 6,353 volunteers to 315 non-profit agencies.
- VolunteerYourTime.org, the United Way-led website collaboration, received more than 39,000 unique visitors in 2008.
- During last year’s United Way Days of Caring, 2,467 people volunteered for a total of 8,161 hours. The estimated dollar value of that time is \$159,221.
- Volunteers have made Dane County safer, helped children learn to read, kept seniors living independently in their homes, helped families find affordable housing and much more.

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### **3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Mike McKinney Award Winner**

#### **Genna Eaton**

Genna moved to Waunakee less than 10 years ago and faced the normal challenges of integrating into a smaller community. Shortly after the move, Genna's husband was laid off and their family had no income for a short period. Genna worked hard to find the services and resources in the area to help meet her family's immediate basic needs. Touched by the difficulty of discovering the necessary resources for her family, Genna made a personal commitment to help others who might be in need in her new community.

With her family back on its feet, Genna began making good on that commitment. In 2004 Genna Eaton informally started the Waunakee Neighborhood Connection (WNC), and began organizing a coat drive for children she saw walking to school without warm clothing. What started as an email list to friends has grown to a 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization that serves over 120 local families and 350 individuals who are in need of assistance. Genna does everything from managing day-to-day activities of the center's household store, which provides free clothing, bedding, kitchenware, diapers, and other household items to her community. The needed supplies from the free store help struggling families save money and avoid homelessness. In addition to coordinating free SHARE Christmas and Easter meals and organizing monthly give-away programs for batteries, toiletries, and needed household items, Genna writes grants, manages the board of directors and volunteers, and secures local business sponsors to expand WNC's services to the community. She does all this in the 30-40 hours a week she volunteers. Far from being an outsider in her adopted community anymore, Genna Eaton has become an essential force in the lives of Waunakee residents. She is an exceptional example of volunteerism for this community and United Way is proud to honor her with the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Mike McKinney Award.

#### **Community Volunteer Award Winners**

##### **Emmett Schulte**

A retired soils professor from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Emmett Schulte has served the community for 10 years as the co-founder and executive director of the Madison Area Food Pantry Gardens. The Madison Area Food Pantry Gardens Project consists of five acres of vegetable gardens that are raised for the sole purpose of providing fresh produce to Madison Area Food Pantries. Emmett's knowledge of soils and skill of gardening has made the gardens immensely productive. During its 10 years of operation, the project has raised a little over 1,000,000 pounds of produce for Madison Area food pantries.

Each year during the six months of planting, cultivating, and harvesting the produce, Emmett spends about 30 hours a week in the gardens. Initially, he tills the soil, measures and stakes every row, and prepares the garden for volunteers. As there is no paid staff for the gardens, Emmett must also coordinate and schedule volunteer groups to work in the gardens. In addition to this administrative work, Emmett works along side each group of volunteers to help them be more productive and to show them the value of their contribution.

##### **Carolyn H. Shelp**

When disaster strikes, victims often need a helping hand to recover and rebuild their lives. Without the expertise and dedication of this award winner, that kind of support would be more difficult to find in Dane County. Over the past seven years, Ms. Shelp has contributed an astounding 10,000 hours as a disaster recovery service provider and team coordinator at American Red Cross – Badger Chapter. She has served in many roles throughout the organization from improving operations systems to help the Red Cross do work more efficiently

to volunteer group management. On many occasions, including during the flooding of 2009, Carolyn Shelp has set aside her life to respond to the needs of others during times of extreme adversity.

## **Youth Award Winner**

### **Andrew Maduka**

This year's youth Award Winner is a role model for other young people in his neighborhood. He is a youth counselor and tutor at the East Madison Community Center, and during the summer, he takes on the role of Camp Counselor. After arriving in Madison as a young boy from his native Nigeria, this youth winner has made an enormous impact on the Center and all of its participants.

John Marmelink who works at the East Madison Community Center had this to say about Andrew Maduka: "Andrew has overcome hurdles in his life and is now giving back to his community by serving as a youth counselor. He gives his time and knowledge to make a difference in children's lives without asking anything in return."

## **Business Award Winner**

### **State Farm Insurance**

State Farm Insurance executives, agents, and staff have volunteered for the Urban League of Greater Madison's College Readiness and Career Development programs for the past two years. State Farm's core volunteer efforts have been focused on the Urban League's year round Martin Luther King Jr. Youth Service Program.

The MLK Youth Service Program has four main components:

- 1) The MLK Jr. Day of Service – where more than 500 youth come together to observe the Holiday as a day of service.
- 2) The 100 Hour Youth Volunteer Challenge- encourages students to perform at least 100 hours of community service, and rewards those students that complete the challenge with a President's Volunteer Service Award.
- 3) The MLK Youth Planning Council- middle and high school students learn leadership skills by planning the MLK day of Service activities and promoting volunteerism among their peers throughout the year.
- 4) MLK Youth Recognition Breakfast- On the Sunday of the King weekend, Urban League hosts this breakfast where over 200 students are presented with the Outstanding Young Person Award and the MLK College Scholarships.

State Farm employees are extremely involved with the MLK Youth Service Initiative, whether they are serving as volunteers at the recognition breakfast or offering their time and expertise as members of the MLK College Scholarship selection board. On the MLK Jr. Day of Service, State Farm agents and employees also conduct educational workshops encouraging youth to take the 100-Hour Challenge and make a commitment to community service.

## **Community Volunteer Award Honorees**

### **Dave Zastrow**

This Honoree has been with the Marshall/Waterloo Food Pantry for 17 years, and has volunteered well over 12,000 hours feeding hungry people in Marshall and Waterloo. This pantry serves over 100 families per month, in large part due to Dave's willingness to wear so many hats for the organization.

Claire Jones, a Board Member of the Marshall/Waterloo Food Pantry, nominated Dave because of his efforts to do whatever it takes to achieve the mission of the pantry. He is there almost every hour that the pantry is open. If there is immediate need while the pantry is closed, Dave distributes food to the people who need it. Despite recent health problems, he picks up food donations from distributors and grocery stores, and ensures that all food is fresh and in good condition. According to Claire, without Dave, there would be no pantry for the hungry people in Marshall and Waterloo.

### **Aomar Elkaini**

Mr. Elkaini immigrated to Madison from Morocco seeking better medical care for one of his three daughters. Despite the difficulty of leaving his home, his culture, and his wife and children, he has become a committed community volunteer in a few short years. Aomar has been volunteering at the Lussier (LOO-sure) Community Education Center in a variety of ways over the past five years, from assisting in the food pantry to serving at the Madison Senior Coalition Senior Meal Program. He says that if you want your community to be better, like he does, you can't complain and complain. You have to do something about it.

Aomar's innovative thinking has improved many operations at the Center, including the Food From Friends program. During these difficult economic times, Aomar has added to his normal volunteering hours by assuming additional custodial duties, which have helped the center save even more money for services.

### **America Domingo**

America (Mary) Domingo has been a Parent Advocate on the Parent Stressline of the Canopy Center Healing and Family Support Services since August 2007. As a Parent Advocate, Mary listens to the stresses, concerns, and fears of the parent callers and offers her support, advice, and uplifting spirit. Mary understands the struggles of parenthood, and volunteers on the Stressline to help others know they are not alone.

When Mary was young, she was diagnosed with polio, which resurfaced when she was going through a difficult time in her life. As a single parent, Mary is raising seven children on her own, while also dealing with this disease. She knows the difficulties of parenthood firsthand, and volunteers her time as a Parent Advocate to be the support she knows parents need.

Mary's dedication to volunteering is an inspiration to us all, especially those who feel they do not have enough time to volunteer. In addition to being a parent, a grandparent, and a full time UW-Madison student, Mary volunteers for not one, but five organizations throughout Madison, and often goes above and beyond the call of duty. The Canopy Center asks of a minimum of 2 hours a week from its Parent Advocates, but Mary averages around 20 hours a week, the most hours logged of all the Parent Advocate volunteers.

Mary believes that volunteering is a part of life, and sees her life as being about giving back to others. Her passion, commitment, determination and heart are an inspiration to volunteers everywhere.

### **Heidi Stibbe Knight**

In 1997, Heidi Stibbe Knight at YWCA in need of support to rebuild her life. Today, she gives back to the organization by contributing 120 hours per month to helping talented, but struggling women present their most polished image to potential and new employers by providing them with professional attire and accessories. These items and Heidi's experienced advice ensure that these women become competitive in the marketplace and that employers take them seriously.

Heidi's talent and dedication at the Suited for Success Boutique at YWCA allows her to perform both administrative and direct service functions. Heidi Stibbe Knight is responsible for a complex set of activities, from volunteer training to creative problem solving. Heidi's story is especially compelling because her involvement with YWCA began in 1997, when she arrived in need of support and resources. Today she is helping the Boutique move to its new home at the YWCA Madison Empowerment Center

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### **Our community's Agenda for Change**

- **Students of color achieve at the same rate as white students.**
- **Children are cared for and have fun as they become prepared for school.**
- **People who are uninsured have access to health care.**
- **There is a decrease in homelessness.**
- **Seniors and people with disabilities are able to stay in their homes.**
- **There is a reduction in violence toward individuals and families.**
- **Non-profit agencies and volunteers are strong partners in achieving measurable results.**

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### **United Way of Dane County**

**United Way of Dane County is creating real, long-lasting solutions through the Agenda for Change, the seven goals identified by the community as most critical.**

**By targeting specific goals, United Way is able to forge partnerships, focus resources and unite the community to tackle the root causes of problems. We're changing the way our community operates by uniting people to create a lasting impact.**